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In the Claims:

- 1.(previously presented) A method of softening water, wherein hard water is contacted with a container containing one or more water-softening agents able to bind calcium ions, the container having an enclosing wall wherein at least part of the wall is permeable to the water and to components dissolved therein characterised in that the product is stored and removed prior to use from packaging having a moisture vapour transmission rate of less than $30\text{g/m}^2/\text{day}$.
- 2.(previously presented) A method according to claim 2 wherein at least one water-softening agent is substantially water-insoluble.
- 3.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the method is a method used in a ware washing machine.
- 4.(previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein at least one water-softening agent is a cation exchange resin.
- 5.(previously presented) A water-softening product comprising a container containing one or more water-softening agents, the container having an enclosing wall which in at least part of the wall is permeable to water and to components dissolved in, the container being held within a package having a moisture vapour transmission rate of less than $30\text{g/m}^2/\text{day}$.
- 6.(original) A water-softening product as claimed in claim 5 wherein at least one water-softening agent is water-soluble.
- 7.(previously presented) A water-softening product according to claim 5 wherein the container is a flat container.

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- 8.(previously presented) A water-softening product according to claim 7 wherein the container wall comprises a sheet.
- 9.(previously presented) A water-softening product according to claim 8 wherein the sheet is a woven or non-woven material.
- 10.(previously presented) A water-softening product according to claim 5 according to claim 5 wherein the packaging is formed from a sheet of flexible material.
- 11.(previously presented) A method of providing improved cleaning in a clothes washing machine, wherein a product containing a substantially water-insoluble water softening agent, having a wall permeable to water and to metal ions therein but impermeable to the agent is located in the machine such that hard water flows through the product, thereby effecting the softening of the water in the machine characterised in that the product is stored and removed prior to use from packaging having a MVTR of less than $30\text{g/m}^2/\text{day}$.
- 12.(previously presented) A water-softening product according to claim 5 wherein the container is a sachet.